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STORING HOME CROPS

- * HOME GARDEN PRODUCTION IS REACHING NEW RECORDS.
- * GOOD STORAGE ALONG WITH CANNING MEANS GREATER UTILIZATION.
- * HERE'S INFORMATION ON WHAT, WHERE AND HOW TO STORE.

Home garden production will approach an all-time high this year. Approximately 18-20 million gardeners, working with skill developed during the war years, and favored by good crop conditions, are producing a tremendous amount of food. This food can be of great help to the family budget. It can help relieve the inflationary pressure on food prices. But proper care must be taken to insure that all of it is used and none of it is wasted.

Home canning and preservation in frozen food lockers saves a large portion of the garden crops during periods of abundance for winter and out-of-season use. Literally BILLIONS of quarts of food are being preserved in these ways by the housewives of America during this year's canning season.

But more still can be done. Some late and fall garden crops and cured meats are preserved better in simple storage places, IF PROPER CARE IS TAKEN TO PREVENT SPOILAGE AND FREEZING, than by the somewhat more difficult processes of canning.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can make an important contribution to the total food supply of the country by helping promote storage of garden crops that otherwise may be wasted. This fact sheet gives you information in brief form on what can be stored, where it can be stored and how to go about it. This is information every gardener should have. You can help him get it!

FURTHER INFORMATION

More detailed information is available. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has several pamphlets telling how to cure meats and prepare food for storage. Local County Agricultural Extension Offices, Agriculture and Home Economics Teachers, State Production and Marketing Administration Offices, and the Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C., will mail on request further information on food and meat storage techniques.

Especially recommended is USDA Farmers' Bulletin 1939, entitled HOME STORAGE OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS.

The Agricultural Extension Service of the Land Grant Colleges will furnish free upon request, bulletins on home food storage adapted to local conditions.

A one-reel (13 minutes) sound movie, "Saving the Garden Crop," is available in both 16 mm. and 35 mm. Two movies on curing meat are available: "Curing Pork Country Style," (2 reels, 16 mm., sound; partly in color; 20 minutes), and "Pork on the Farm," (2 reels, 16 mm. and 35 mm., sound; 22 minutes). Copies of these films may be borrowed from the State Agricultural Extension Service or the State University Film Libraries.

FOOD STORAGE FACTS

What May Be Stored

The following foods may be stored "as is" in a cool, damp and well-ventilated cellar: late cabbage, potatoes, parsnips, turnips, beets, carrots, and late apples and winter varieties of pears.

Dry storage in a generally cool place is recommended for dried beans (limas, etc.) peas, onions, hot pepper and cured meats.

Moderately cool and dry storage is adequate for pumpkins, squashes and sweet potatoes.

Where To Store Foods

A large and well ventilated closet in any cellar will make an excellent storage bin for fruits and vegetables. Ordinarily if there is a furnace, the storage room should be well sealed from the rest of the basement; windows can be used for ventilation, and work excellently to aid in temperature control -- being opened on cool nights and closed during warm days, etc. Storage cellars may be dug under out-buildings or barns; and outdoor storage cellars or root cellars work even better than those under a house, since earth is the best floor, and with a good ventilation system, the temperature can be maintained cool and above freezing the year round.

Meat can also be stored if properly cured. It should be decided where and how the meat is to be stored before the curing method is selected. When meat is cured by the saltier country cure method it can be stored safely in smokehouse or pantry without refrigeration. Milder commercial products are almost as perishable as fresh pork and should be stored under refrigeration until cooked.

Care To Avoid Spoilage

When foods are being prepared for storage, great care must be taken to discard all fruits or vegetables that show any sign of injury or decay; this point cannot be over-emphasized, since once decay gets into a bin of food, it may quickly spoil the whole lot.

As a rule, vegetables should be kept in a moist and cool atmosphere where they will not freeze; although there are exceptions such as the dried peas and beans and meats which require dry storage.

Since fresh meat is highly perishable, proper handling is necessary to make it into sound and palatable products that will keep satisfactorily. Success in preparing meat depends upon strict attention to methods used. None of the details are difficult, but all are important. The following USDA Bulletins and Circulars are recommended:

Pork On The Farm -- Farmers' Bulletin 1186
Curing Pork Country Style -- AWI-108
Smokehouses and Hog Slaughtering Equipment -- AWI-68
Protect Home Cured Meats from Insects -- AIS-52

Your own State Agricultural College has excellent bulletins on curing and storing meat at home.

Good ventilation is necessary in successful food storage to carry off odors and to maintain the proper temperature and humidity. Windows should be darkened to keep out light. Containers should be set a few inches off the ground to assure proper circulation of air.

Precaution should be taken to prevent damage by rats, mice and insects.

What Not To Do

Very often, waste results from the attempt to store certain fruits and vegetables that cannot be stored. Peaches and tomatoes can not be stored; they should be canned. Sweet peppers, egg-plant and melons, also, cannot be stored.

Certain foods cannot be stored together, because they flavor one another disagreeably. Apples should not be stored with cabbage, potatoes or root crops. Celery should not be stored with turnips or cabbage, as it picks up odors very quickly.

Cabbage and turnips should not be stored in the basement, as they tend to smell up the house.

Good Storage Cuts Waste

Since food put in storage each year represents a very large percent of total food stores to carry the nation through the winter period, it is essential that waste through inadequately equipped storage facilities or poor storage technique be held at a minimum.



